SUSANNA.

AN

ORATORIO.

With Alterations and Additions.

As it is Perform'd at the

THEATRE-ROYAL

IN

COVENT-GARDEN.

Set to Muſick by GEORGE-FREDERICK HANDEL, Eſq;

LONDON:

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MDCCLIX.

[Price One Shilling.]

SUSANNA.

IN

ORATORIO.

THE WORDS

BY

CONGREVE.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

CHELSIAS, Susanna's *Father.*

JOACIM, *her Husband.*

DANIEL.

1 ELDER.

2 ELDER.

JUDGE.

WOMEN.

SUSANNA.

An Attendant.

SUSANNA.

AN

ORATORIO.

PART I. SCENE I.

JOACIM, SUSANNA, CHELSIAS, *and* Chorus *of* Iſraelites.

CHORUS.

HOW *long, Oh Lord! ſhall* Iſrael *groan*
In Slav'ry and in Pain,
Jehovah! *hear thy People's Moan,*
And break th' Oppreſſor's Chain.

Joacim. Our Crimes repeated, have provok'd his Rage,
And now He ſcourges a degenerate Age.
My Wife, my fair *Suſanna*, come,
And from my Boſom chaſe this Gloom.

Suſanna.

Suſanna. Oh *Joacim!* when thou art by,
My Soul dilates with new-born Joy;
Down my pale Cheeks the Tears no longer run,
But fly, like Dew, before the morning Sun.

DUET.

Joacim. *When thou art nigh*
My Pulſe beats high,
And Raptures ſwell my Breaſt:
Suſanna. *Search, ſearch my Mind,*
And there you'll find
Your lovely Form impreſs'd.
Both. *With Joy in their Wings the young Moments ſhall fly,*
And chaſe ev'ry Cloud that would darken the Sky:
If thou art but preſent my Cares to beguile,
Oppreſſion is ſoftned, and Bondage will ſmile.

Chelſias. Lives there in *Babylon* ſo bleſs'd a Pair?
Soft roll my Age, unknown to Pain or Care:
My virtuous Daughter learnt the Words of Truth,
To fear the Lord I taught her pious Youth.
Joacim. Source of each Joy, thou Comfort of my Life,
My fair *Suſanna*, my unſpotted Wife!
A while I'm ſummon'd from the Town away,
Yet think not long I'll from thy Preſence ſtay:
Mean while, be't thine each Friend to entertain,
With Converſe ſweet make light their galling Chain;
Each true Believer ſhall be welcome here,
And nouriſh pious Hopes without a Fear.

Suſanna. In this alone with Sorrow I obey;
What Joy have I when *Joacim*'s away;
Forgive the Tears that trickle from my Eyes,
Be dumb my Sorrows, and unheard my Sighs.
Joacim. Ere round the Sphere the Sun has urg'd his Wain,
And ſix times reſted in the weſtern Main,
Depend, my Fair, to ſee your Lord return.
Suſanna. 'Till then, *Suſanna*, 'tis thy Lot to mourn.

AIR.

Joacim. *The Parent Bird, in ſearch of Food,*
A while deſerts her callow Brood;
What Torments wring her anxious Breaſt,
Leſt ſome rude Hand deſpoil her Neſt:
But when ſhe homewards does repair,
And finds each flutt'ring Infant there,
The Joy ſhe feels, my Soul explain,
When next my Fair I greet again.

[*Exeunt* Joacim *and* Chelſias.

SCENE II.

SUSANNA.

Suſanna. On *Joacim*, may ev'ry Joy attend
At once a Husband, Lover, and a Friend.

RECITATIVE *accompany'd.*

What means this Weight that in my Boſom lies?
What mean theſe Shades that ſwim before my Eyes?

If

If ought prophetic in this Breaſt I feel
Portending Good, Oh! quick the ſame reveal.
Let *Joacim*, my Huſband, find it all;
If bad, on me alone the Danger fall.

AIR.

Bending to the Throne of Glory,
This alone, great God, I crave;
Let me innocent before you
Riſe from the devouring Grave.
If thy Will is now requiring
That I die before my Time,
All my longing Soul's deſiring
Is to fall without a Crime.

SCENE III.

Firſt ELDER.

RECITATIVE *accompany'd.*

1 *Elder.* Tyrannic Love! I feel thy cruel Dart,
Nor Age protects me from the burning Smart.
What, ſeated with the Elders of the Land,
To guide ſtern Juſtice? Unrelenting Hand!
Shall I ſubmit to feel the raging Fires?
Youth pleads a Warrant for his hot Deſires:
But when the Blood ſhould ſcarce attempt to flow,
I feel the purple Torrents fiercely glow;
Love conquers all; alas! I find it ſo.

AIR.

AIR.

Ye verdant Hills, ye balmy Vales,
Bear witneſs of my Pains;
How oft' have Shinar's *golden Dales*
Been taught my am'rous Strains!
The wounded Oaks in yonder Grove,
Retain the Name of her I love.

In vain would Age his Ice beſpread,
To numb each gay Deſire;
Tho' ſev'nty Winters hoar my Head,
My Heart is ſtill on fire.
By moſſy Fount and Grot I rove,
And gently murmur Songs of Love.

Oh! ſweeteſt of thy lovely Race,
Unveil thy matchleſs Charms,
Let me adore that Angel's Face,
And die within thy Arms;
My ceaſeleſs Pangs thy Boſom move,
To grant the juſt Returns of Love.

SCENE IV.

1ſt *and* 2d ELDER, *and* CHORUS.

2 *Elder.* Say, is it fit that Age ſhould drop his Pride,
To ſooth and fondle at a Woman's Side?
Was it for this the Faithful ſpoke my Fame,
Nor fear'd Injuſtice when they heard my Name?
Now, Approbation ſhall withdraw her Praiſe,
And dark Reproach attend my ſetting Days.

1 *Elder.*

1 *Elder.* Hail! reverend Brother; by that penſive Face,
Methinks ſome long-diſputed, dubious Caſe,
Waits the Deciſion of thy blameleſs Tongue.

2 *Elder.* Who judge too raſhly, will be often wrong.

1 *Elder.* Then tell your Friend why thus you thoughtful ſtand,
Purſe your arch'd Brow, and croſs each folded Hand?

2 *Elder.* Suppoſe 'twere Love, could'ſt thou preſcribe a Cure?

1 *Elder.* Alas! I cannot---I thoſe Pangs endure:
The Shafts that fly from fair *Suſanna*'s Eyes
Wound the grave Stateſman, and unman the Wiſe;
Her beauteous Image fills up all my Heart;
Is't for her Charms you likewiſe feel the Smart?

2 *Elder.* Yes; 'tis her Beauty, like a magick Spell,
That fires my Blood and bids my Years rebel:
Love, frantic Love, does all this Boſom rule,
To its hot Rage the burning Dog-Star's cool.

A I R.

The Oak, that for a thouſand Years
Withſtood the Tempeſt's Might,
Like me, the darted Light'ning fears,
And flames with ſudden Light.
Curs'd be the Day, and curs'd the fatal Hour
That brought my Age into a Woman's Power.

1 *Elder.* Ye winged gales! convey theſe whiſp'ring Sighs,
And tell *Suſanna* that her Lover dies:
But ſoftly murmur when you ſpeak my Name;
Unfold my Paſſion, but conceal my Shame.

2 *Elder.* See! where around the quiv'ring Poplars twine,
The ruddy Cluſters of the mantling Vine,
The Charmer ſits---with winged Haſte we'll fly,
And, cloſe conceal'd from ev'ry ſearching Eye,
Await our Time; then ruſh upon the Fair,
Force her to Bliſs, and cure our wild Deſpair.

AIR.

1 Elder. *When the Trumpet ſounds to Arms,*
Will the ling'ring Soldier ſtay?
When the Nymph diſplays her Charms,
Who the Call will diſobey?

Age and Dignity in vain
Loudly thunder in my Ear,
"From the horrid Act refrain."
Love forbids my Soul to fear.

CHORUS.

Righteous Heav'n beholds their Guile,
And forbears his Wrath a while;
Yet his Bolt ſhall quickly fly,
Darted through the flaming Sky:
Tremble, Guilt, for thou ſhalt find,
Wrath divine outſtrips the Wind.

PART II. SCENE I.

JOACIM *ſolus.*

FROST nips the Flow'rs that would the Fields adorn,
And tainted Mildews waſte the bearded Corn;
Untimely Storms the vernal Grove deſtroy,
And Abſence, cruel Abſence, murders Joy.

AIR.

On fair Euphrates' *verdant Side,*
Where nodding Oſiers play,
With her I've mark'd the rolling Tide,
And ev'ry Sight was gay.

No more the flow'ry Banks have Charms
To pleaſe me as before,
'Till dear Suſanna *fills theſe Arms,*
Contentment is no more. Da Capo. [Exit.

SCENE II.

SUSANNA *and* Attendant.

Suſanna. Lead me, Oh lead me to ſome cool Retreat,
My Spirits faint beneath the burning Heat.

AIR.

Cryſtal Streams in Murmurs flowing,
Balmy Breezes gently blowing,
Rob of Sweets the Jeſs'min Bow'r:
Bow the Pines that ſhade yon Mountain,
Curl the ſoftly-trickling Fountain,
Cool the noon-tide's raging Pow'r.

Suſanna. Too lovely Youth, for whom theſe Sorrows flow,
When will thy Preſence baniſh ev'ry Woe?
Attendant. Soon will thy Lord, thy *Joacim*, return;
Ceaſe then ſo ſhort an Abſcence thus to mourn.
Suſanna. Alas! whoe'er has felt the ſubtle Fire,
The pleaſing Anguiſh of a chaſte Deſire,
Knows that an Hour ſwells out into a Day,
The lovely Object of our Vows away:
But, when the Darling of our Soul is near,
Time clothes with Eagles Wings the rolling Year.
But thou art kind, nor think thy Miſtreſs vain,
If now I wiſh to hear the tender Strain,
Which *Joacim* compos'd, ere yet he led
Theſe humble Beauties to the bridal Bed.

AIR.

Attend. *Ask if yon damaſk Roſe be ſweet,*
That ſcents th' ambient Air;
Then aſk each Shepherd that you meet
If dear Suſanna's *fair.*

Say, will the Vulture leave his Prey,
And warble thro' the Grove?
Bid wanton Linnets quit the Spray,
Then doubt thy Shepherd's Love.

The Spoils of War let Heroes ſhare;
Let Pride in Splendor ſhine;
Ye Bards, unenvy'd Laurels wear;
Be fair Suſanna *mine.*

Suſanna.

Suſanna. In vain you try to cure my riſing Grief,
My wounded Boſom ſpurns at all Relief.
Attendant. I know the Pangs that cleave the bleeding Heart,
Still in my Breaſt I feel the pointed Dart;
An humble Swain did all my Pains create,
An humble Swain beſt ſuited with my State:
But Death ſoon ſeiz'd him, an untimely Prize!
And tore the Youth for ever from my Eyes.

AIR.

Beneath the Cypreſs' gloomy Shade,
Where ſilver Lilies paint the Glade,
I ſaw the lovely Shepherd laid,
Whoſe Loſs I ſtill deplore:
He was in truth the ſweeteſt Swain
That ever trod this flow'ry Plain,
Or wak'd in Virgin's Heart a Pain;
But is, alas! no more.

Suſanna. Thy plaintive Strains my inmoſt Sorrows move,
For well *Suſanna* knows the Pangs of Love.
Attendant. Excuſe th' involuntary Tears that flow,
But my ſad Heart muſt vent its ſecret Woe.
Suſanna. I was to blame to wake thy inmoſt Smart;
Compoſe, ſweet Maid, compoſe thy beating Heart.
But haſte, good Virgin, hither Unguents bring,
And all the Spices that embalm the Spring;
To ſhun the ſcorching Day, I mean to lave
My fainting Limbs in yonder ſilver Wave. [*Exit* Attendant.

SCENE

SCENE III.

SUSANNA *and two* ELDERS.

A ſhort Symphony.

Suſanna. But hark! what ſudden Noiſe invades my Ear?
Defend me, Heav'n, from ev'ry Wrong I fear!----
What mean ye both? Say, why do ye invade
The awful Gloom of this ſequeſter'd Shade?

AIR.

1 Elder. *Blooming as the Face of Spring,*
Mild as Beams of dying Light,
Softer than the Cygnet's Wing,
Source of Joy and fond Delight!
Hear my Pray'r,
Charming Fair,
With one Smile diſmiſs my Care.

2 *Elder.* We long have languiſh'd, and now mean to prove
The matchleſs Sweets of long expecting Love.
Suſanna. You wrong yourſelves to plead ſo foul a Cauſe;
Are theſe the boaſted Guardians of our Laws?
But ſure in Sport you both together came,
For I may doubt your yet unſpotted Fame?
Hence, pious Elders, leſt ſome jealous Spy
Behold your Conduct with an envious Eye.

AIR.

AIR.

2 Elder. *The Torrent that ſweeps in its Courſe*
Whole Foreſts and Cities along,
Reſiſtleſs is found in its Force,
My Paſſion is equally ſtrong.

Whate'er would my Purpoſe reſtrain,
In pieces my Fury ſhall tear,
Denial is offer'd in vain;
Then yield to Intreaty, proud Fair.

Suſanna. Deceitful Wolves! who left in Truth's Defence,
Wrong the high Truſt, and prey on Innocence;
Deſiſt, raſh Men! nor preſs my trembling Hand,
Leſt I awake the Vengeance of the Land.

2 *Elder.* Thou fooliſh Woman! will thy 'Plaints avail
When our grave Tongues repeat the well-forg'd Tale?
Will thoſe ſuſpect, to whom your Grief complains,
That Blood could riot in an Elder's Veins?

TRIO.

Suſanna. *Away, away!*
Ye tempt me both in vain,
1 Elder. *Yet ſtay, yet ſtay,*
And hear my love-ſick Strain.
2 Elder. *I ſcorn to intreat,*
When by Force I may gain
Relief to my Sorrows,
And Eaſe to my Pain.

Suſanna.

Suſanna. Alas! I find the fatal Toils are ſet,
Turn as I will I ſtruggle in the Net:
Yet hear the inmoſt Purpoſe of my Soul,
Which Wrongs ſhall ne'er ſuppreſs, nor Fears control;
By Falſhood's Aid appearing Truth be thine,
Self-conſcious Virtue ſhall be ever mine.

2 *Elder.* That ſhall be try'd---Who waits there?---Ho, within!

SCENE IV.

Enter CHORUS.

2 *Elder.* I caught the fair Delinquent in her Sin;
The youthful Partner of her ſtol'n Embrace
Broke from our feeble Arms, and fled the Place.
Ourſelves beheld within the mazy Grove
Their guilty Pleaſures, and adult'rous Love.

1 *Elder.* To Judgment ſoon th' ill-fated Beauty lead,
Ah! would theſe Eyes had ne'er beheld the Deed!

AIR.

Suſanna. *If guiltleſs Blood be your Intent,*
I here reſign it all;
Fearleſs of Death, as innocent,
I triumph in my Fall:
And, if to Fate my Days muſt run,
Oh righteous Heav'n! thy Will be done.

2 *Elder.*

2 *Elder.* [*Interrupting her.*] Quick to her Fate the looſe
Adult'reſs bear,
Fair to the Eye, but falſer than ſhe's fair.
[Suſanna *repeats the Air* If guiltleſs Blood, &c.

CHORUS.

Let Juſtice reign, and flouriſh thro' the Land,
Nor Youth, nor Charms divert her iron Hand.

SCENE V.

JOACIM *and* CHORUS.

Joacim. Is fair *Suſanna* falſe? It ne'er can be.
Deteſted Scroll ne'er gain Belief from me.
Is ſhe not ſofter than the Breath of Love,
Fair as the Roe, and conſtant as the Dove?
Hence, let me ſpeed to *Babylon*'s proud Walls,
Where Danger threatens, and *Suſanna* calls.

AIR.

On the rapid Whirlwind's Wing,
See, I fly to ſeek the Fair;
On the rapid Whirlwind's Wing,
Lo I cleave the yielding Air.
At my Sight,
Freſh Delight
From her Breaſt ſhall chace Deſpair.

CHORUS.

Oh Joacim! *thy wedded Truth*
Is warranted by Heav'n;
And to thy Faith, illuſtrious Youth,
Shall due Reward be giv'n.

PART III. SCENE I.

SUSANNA, ELDERS, DANIEL, JUDGE, *and* CHORUS.

CHORUS.

THE Cauſe is decided, the Sentence decreed,
Suſanna *is guilty,* Suſanna *muſt bleed.*

Suſanna. I hear my Doom, nor yet the Laws accuſe,
The Witneſſes your much-wrong'd Ears abuſe.
Then welcome Death! I meet you with Delight,
And change this Earth for Realms of endleſs Light.

AIR.

Faith diſplays her roſy Wing;
Cherubs Songs of Gladneſs ſing;
Virtue, clad in bright Array,
Streaming with eternal Day,
Whiſpers in my raviſh'd Ear,
" *Innocence ſhall never fear;*
" *Welcome to this bright Abode,*
" *Seat of Angels, Seat of God.*"

1 *Elder.* Permit me, Fair, to mourn thy Fate ſevere,
And join thy Sorrows with one pious Tear.

AIR.

AIR.

Round thy Urn my Tears ſhall flow,
Joy no more this Heart ſhall know;

The Remembrance of thy Woe
Never ceaſing,
Still increaſing,
With the Length of Time ſhall grow.

Suſanna. 'Tis thus the Crocodile his Grief diſplays,
Sheds the falſe Dew, and, while he weeps, betrays.
Ah! when I think what *Joacim* muſt feel,
This tortur'd Heart can ſcarce its Pangs conceal.

RECITATIVE *accompany'd.*

But you, who ſee me on the Verge of Life,
I charge you, greet him from his dying Wife;
Tell him, howe'er the Elders have decreed,
Their impious Luſt provok'd the bloody Deed;
And, had *Suſanna* plighted Vows betray'd,
Beneath the Cover of yon conſcious Shade,
Their venal Tongues had ſpar'd her much-wrong'd Name,
Nor mark'd her Actions with the Brand of Shame.

2 *Elder.* The Sentence now is paſt; the Wretch convey
To inſtant Death; I'll hear no more---away.

Daniel. The Blood of Innocence, with ceaſeleſs Cries,
Shall cleave the Womb of Earth, and reach the Skies.

1 *Elder.* What Voice is that ſo clam'rous in the Croud,
That cenſures Judgment in a Tone ſo loud?

Daniel. Fools that ye are, too forward to believe
A varniſh'd Tale, invented to deceive;

Reverſe, reverſe the ſtern Decree,
And ſet the chaſte *Suſanna* free.

1 *Elder.* Preſumptuous Boy! art thou to dictate here?
Think of thy Youth, and ſhake with awful Fear.

AIR.

Daniel. *'Tis not Age's ſullen Face,*
Wrinkled Front, and ſolemn Pace,
That the truly Wiſe declares.
Sacred Wiſdom oft appears
In the Bloom of vernal Years,
Oft ſhe flies from ſilver Hairs.

Judge. Oh, wond'rous Youth! rejudge the Cauſe,
And from thy Tongue pronounce the Laws;
As ſhe appears to thy diſcerning Eye,
The Fair we will acquit, or doom to die.

Daniel. If you demand that I the Cauſe decide,
Her old Accuſers for a while divide;
Let not the One the Other's Queſtions hear,
For truth will ne'er in diff'rent Garbs appear.

CHORUS.

Impartial Heav'n! whoſe Hand ſhall never ceaſe
To chear fair Virtue with the Balm of Peace,
With thy own Ardors bleſs the pious Youth,
And guide his Footſteps to the Paths of Truth.

Daniel. Thou artful Wretch, in Vice's Practice gray,
Who ſav'ſt the Guilty, and the Juſt would ſlay;
Thou ſay'ſt that lately, with a wanton Youth,
The fair *Suſanna* broke her Vows of Truth;

If

If ſo, what Tree, declare at once, declare,
Stretch'd forth her Boughs to ſcreen the guilty Pair?

1 *Elder.* A verdant Lentiſk, Pride of all the Grove,
Stood the gay Witneſs of their lawleſs Love.

Daniel. Falſe is thy Tale, thy Lips have utter'd Lies,
And Heav'n ſhall ſcourge you for your Blaſphemies.

[*A ſhort Symphony.*]

And ſay, thou Partner in the impious Deed,
Of *Canaan*'s, ſure, and not of *Iſrael*'s Seed,
Beneath what Tree you chaſte *Suſanna* ſaw,
Embrace her Lover, and tranſgreſs the Law.

2 *Elder.* Far to the Weſt, direct your ſtraining Eyes,
Where yon tall Holm-tree darts into the Skies;
See his large Boughs an ample Shade afford,
There, there *Suſanna* wrong'd her wedded Lord.

Daniel. Vain is Deceit when Juſtice holds the Scale,
The Falſhood's flagrant by the vary'd Tale.
Suſanna! from thy captive Dungeon go,
Thy Fame is whiter than unſullied Snow.
For you, an ignominious Death's decreed,
Virtue is clear'd, and impious Guilt ſhall bleed.
And hence be taught, Who Juſtice would diſpenſe
To ſtop the Ear to ev'ry ſoothing Senſe;
Your Mind be ſteel'd againſt each flatt'ring Call,
For, if you ſtumble, you as ſurely fall.
Inſtant conduct them to their Fate,
And rid my Preſence of a Sight I hate:
And hence let Virtue never know a Fear,
For in her Dangers a kind Help is near.

AIR.

AIR.

Chaſtity, thou Cherub bright,
Gentle as the Dawn of Light,
Soft as Muſick's dying Strain:
Teach the Fair how vain is Beauty,
When ſhe breaks the Bounds of Duty,
Vain are Charms, and Graces vain.

Suſanna. But ſee! my Lord, my *Joacim* appears,
With the kind Tutor of my infant Years.

SCENE II.

To them JOACIM *and* CHELSIAS.

AIR.

Joacim. *Gold within the Furnace try'd*
Shall the ſharp Eſſay abide,
Purer from the purging Fire:
So ſhall Virtue, when purſu'd
By foul Envy's venom'd Brood,
With ſuperior Grace aſpire.

Chelſias. The joyful News of chaſte *Suſanna*'s Truth
Wakes me to Comfort, and recalls my Youth.

Suſanna. Receive my Thanks, they're all that I can pay;
If I deſerve, you pointed out the Way.

AIR.

AIR.

Attend. *Endleſs Pleaſure, endleſs Love,*
Joacim *will ever prove;*
On her Boſom ſoft reclining,
Uſeleſs now his Glory lies;
To her Charms his Fame reſigning,
And his Triumphs to her Eyes.

CHORUS.

Endleſs Pleaſure, endleſs Love,
Joacim *will ever prove.*

Suſanna. Lord of my Heart, and of each warm Deſire,
With thee the Flame began, and ſhall expire.

DUET.

Joacim. *To my chaſte* Suſanna's *Praiſe*
I'll the ſwelling Note prolong.
Suſanna. *While my grateful Voice I raiſe,*
Thy dear Name ſhall grace the Song.
Joacim. *Echo, catch the tender Strains,*
Suſanna. *On thy Wings the Muſick bear,*
Both. *Till it reach the diſtant Plains,*
Dying in the Void of Air.

CHORUS.

CHORUS.

A virtuous Wife ſhall ſoften Fortune's Frown,
She's far more precious than a golden Crown.

FINIS.